

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent
Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15th District



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Congressman Dent votes against politicized, pork-laden war supplemental

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) today voted against HR 1591, a party-line bill to cut off funding for the Iraq War in 18 months. Congressman Dent opposed the bill's imposition of Congressional control on the military and inclusion of non-military spending. The legislation barely passed, 218-212.

"The priority of an emergency supplemental funding bill should be to support 150,000 Americans in harm's way as soon as possible, and leave the politics for another discussion," Congressman Dent said. "This bill takes over the execution of the military's command-and-control function and vests it in Congress, making our strategy in Iraq an open book to the enemy."

"What's more, this bill also includes unrelated, non-emergency funding, something unprecedented since I've been in Congress. And also unprecedented was that the majority allowed no amendments. These non-emergency items — like aid to spinach farmers, peanut wholesalers, and the shrimping industry — should have been dealt with separately and should not have been part of an emergency wartime supplemental appropriations bill."

On Thursday, Congressman Dent and nine colleagues signed a letter to Speaker Pelosi and Appropriations Chairman David Obey to warn that this bill will actually delay emergency funding to troops. (Text of letter below.)

President Bush has issued a veto threat as a result of the inclusion of non-emergency spending and policy proposals, and a large number of Members from both sides of the aisle — and in the Senate — have expressed concern over these provisions. “There is little likelihood that this legislation, in its current form, will ever become law,” Congressman Dent noted.

“Providing our troops the funding they need is an obligation Congress has for every brave man and woman in uniform serving in Iraq today, and who are destined to go there in the near future.”

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Text of letter sent 3/22:

Dear Madame Speaker and Chairman Obey:

Our soldiers are risking their lives and it is vital that we provide them with the tools and equipment they have requested. It is our duty to ensure our military has the resources it deems necessary to protect our brave soldiers serving in harm's way and to assure our troops — from general officers down to the privates fresh out of boot camp — that we will continue to support them.

Army officials have warned that disruptive changes in day-to-day operations will occur without immediate supplemental funding. Unfortunately, the bill approved by the House Appropriations Committee on March 15th includes billions of dollars and unrelated provisions not requested by the Administration or our military leaders, which have the potential to obstruct passage of this vital emergency funding.

President Bush has issued a veto threat as a result of the inclusion of non-emergency spending and policy proposals, and a large number of Members from both sides of the aisle have expressed concern over these provisions. While such proposals may warrant consideration on the House floor under different circumstances, this body should not hold critical funding in limbo in order to force political votes. For example, we are concerned that setting an arbitrary timeline for withdrawal would tie the hands of our commanders in the field and assuredly lead to an impasse with the White House, which in turn will further delay this crucial funding.

When it comes to emergency funding for our soldiers, we can not afford to waste precious time arguing over political proposals.

Sincerely,

Michael Castle
Mark Kirk
Charlie Dent
Jim Gerlach
Randy Kuhl
Tom Petri
Todd Platts
Fred Upton
Phil English
Judy Biggert

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